

## FRENCH CULTURE PROJECT: REGIONS IN FRANCE

For this assignment, you will work with a partner to first create a "fact sheet" for a region in France (see the list below). Then you and your partner will present your region to the rest of the class. Each pair will describe a different region. Your work will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

### Fact Sheet

- 1) Completeness—all requested information is supplied 10 pts.
- 2) Accuracy—information is up to date and accurate 10 pts.
- 3) Presentation—information is well-written and is presented in typed form 5 pts.

### Presentation

- 1) Clarity—information is organized clearly for classmates to follow 15 pts.
- 2) Visuals—You should plan to bring clear visual aids for your presentation—maps, photos, slides, posters, etc. See your instructor for help and advice if necessary. 10 pts.

Along with your assignment, you should submit a brief description of how the work was divided between you and your partner.

You will find a sample fact sheet for *la Nièvre*. On your fact sheet, you should provide general information under the following headings:

- 1) **GEOGRAPHY:** Where is this region located? What other regions, countries, and points of interest (mountains, rivers, oceans) is it near or does it contain? What is its terrain like? What is its climate like? What are its major cities?
- 2) **ECONOMY:** What is the basis of this region's economy (agriculture, industry, tourism, etc.)? How important is this region to the economy of France?
- 3) **HISTORY:** What is the historical significance of this region? Did any important historical events occur in this region?
- 4) **CULTURE:** What sets this region apart culturally from the other regions of France? Are there special traditions, cuisine, sights which cannot be found anywhere else in France?
- 5) **RESOURCES:** Give a full bibliographic reference for at least two basic resources for learning more about this region (NOT including an encyclopedia or Internet addresses!) We encourage you to use the World Wide Web to do some of your research.

Your fact sheet should be one page in length, typed and single-spaced. When referring to your region, use the French spelling, placed in italics or quotation

marks. During your presentation, use the French pronunciation of your region.

**List of regions in France** (if you would like to do research on a region not listed, please consult with your instructor):

1. les Alpes
2. l'Alsace-Lorraine
3. l'Aquitaine
4. l'Auvergne/le Limousin
5. la Bretagne
6. la Camargue
7. le Centre
8. la Champagne/les Ardennes
9. la Corse
10. la Côte d'Azur
11. la Côte d'Or
12. la Normandie
13. les Pays-de-la-Loire
14. le Midi-Pyrénées
15. le Périgord
16. la Picardie/le Nord
17. le Poitou-Charantes
18. la Provence
19. le Languedoc-Roussillon
20. la Savoie

## LA NIÈVRE

### GEOGRAPHY

*La Nièvre* is one of the four *départements* which make up the region of *la Bourgogne* (Burgundy) in the northeastern quarter of France. *La Nièvre* is bordered by the regions of *le Centre* to the West and *l'Auvergne* to the South. The eastern part of *la Nièvre* contains a small mountain range called *le Morvan*, portions of which have been set aside for a national park. In the southwest the rivers *la Loire* and *la Nièvre* converge just outside the largest city in the region and the region's capital, *Nevers* (approximately 50,000 inhabitants). The majority of *la Nièvre* is characterized by gently rolling hills and pasture lands with the exception of *le Morvan* which is a rocky granite wilderness, in places densely forested.

### ECONOMY

Due to its gentle topography and its continental climate, *la Nièvre* boasts ideal farming conditions. Its economy is based principally on agriculture as well as on the raising of livestock, primarily cattle. Other industries have also found a home in *la Nièvre* including rubber making at *Château-Chinon*, auto assembly at *Fourchambault*, logging in *le Morvan*, and the bottling of mineral water at *Pougues-les-Eaux*.

### HISTORY

Archeologists have found traces of ancient habitations dating back over 2000 years. One can find vestiges of a Gaulish fortress near *Nevers*, for example. The region came to have great importance in feudal times when a duchy was established in *Nevers*. *Le château ducal* in *Nevers*, built

in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, stands as a reminder of its former glory. In more recent times, *Nevers* has been known as the home of the former socialist Prime Minister of France, *Pierre Bérégovoy*. Indeed *la Nièvre* is a stronghold of the Socialist Party in France. *François Mitterrand*, the socialist president from 1981-1995, was formerly mayor of *Château-Chinon* in *le Morvan* and a representative from *la Nièvre*.

### CULTURE

The region's administrative seat, *Nevers* is known in particular for its stoneware: ornately decorated plates, cups, and pitchers can be purchased in many of the city's finest shops. Outside of France, *Nevers* is perhaps best known as the location for the filming of *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, a film by the *Nouvelle Vague* ("New Wave") director *Alain Resnais* based on a script by the author *Marguerite Duras*. As part of the region of *la Bourgogne*, *la Nièvre* is also known for its excellent cuisine, including *le boeuf bourguignon*, a beef stew made with red wine, *le coq au vin*, chicken in wine sauce, and of course *les escargots*.

### RESOURCES

Ardagh, John & Colin Jones. 1991.

*Cultural Atlas of France*. Oxfordshire, England: Andromeda Oxford Ltd.

*Le Nouveau Guide de la route*. 1983.

Paris: Sélection du Reader's Digest.

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